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## **HARTFORD MAYOR EDDIE PEREZ ANNOUNCES SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN CONSTRUCTING CITY MAGNET SCHOOLS**

*Maintains "there's still a long way to go, but we are making things happen."*

**HARTFORD, CT** – Standing in front of the historic Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School, Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez today announced that the city is making substantial progress in the effort to build more magnet schools. While it's "still not enough," according to the Mayor, the newly-energized Hartford school construction effort is adding new magnets to the city school system in the effort to achieve greater racial, ethnic and economic integration.

In January of 2003, the Sheff plaintiffs and the State of Connecticut reached an agreement that called for eight new magnet schools for Hartford over four years. Since that time, five new magnet schools have opened, with 3 more on the way.

"While all the school systems in this state still have a long way to go before we begin to approach a desegregated educational system, I'm proud that through our school construction effort we are knocking on the door of success, and making real progress," added Perez, "This is another example of the Hartford school building program insuring that we have 21<sup>st</sup> century facilities for our students."

The city's school construction effort was jump-started when Perez took the reins of the state mandated Hartford School Building Committee in 2002. Perez first gained local acclaim when he worked on a similar project earlier in his career: the \$110 million Learning Corridor.

Perez, joined by several local and state dignitaries, made the announcement at Noah Webster Elementary, a school that has been situated in Hartford's West End since 1901. Now known as the **Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School**, it is one of seven Hartford schools targeted for completion in **2005** or **2006**; three of those are magnets. Approximately \$286 million will be spent on these seven schools.

According to Perez, "We are not only building new facilities with these magnet programs, but promoting new opportunities for learning; consider the curriculum based on classical studies at one Hartford magnet school, the emphasis on science and technology at another, and the 'microsociety' concept being promoted here at Noah Webster."

"With so many families from both the City and its surrounding suburbs eager to attend magnet schools, it's more important than ever that we try to build these facilities quickly."

Hartford's school construction process utilizes state bonding money earmarked for the improvement of city schools. Approximately \$800 million will be spent on renovating and constructing a total of 20 schools; the money is bonded by the city, with a substantial reimbursement from the state ranging from 70-100%.

Participating in the announcement along with Perez and Horton Sheff were Jack Hasegawa of the State Department of Education, Hartford School Board Vice-Chairman Dr. Robert Long, and past and present members of the Hartford School Building Committee: **Dr. Robert Henry, Superintendent of Hartford Schools, Councilwoman Veronica Airey-Wilson, Brad Noel, Miguel Matos, and Councilman James Boucher.**